Article

Ethnic Soups from Rupea Area (Romania) as Resources for Sustainable Local Development

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Abstract: In Rupea area, in central Romania, Romanians, Saxons, Magyars and Roma people live. Their traditional ethnic cuisines represent intangible cultural heritage resources. In a qualitative research based on semi-structured interviews with respondents from all four ethnicities, we identified the dishes, spices and tastes considered representative by them through thematic analysis. We compared ethnic gastronomic characteristics using doublets of gustemes, based on Claude Lévi-Strauss' model, and highlighted the touristic potential of serving the soups of all ethnic groups as a common touristic package. The comparison highlighted similarities due to the dependence of all locals on indigenous food resources, but also differences due to the different propensity to capitalize on spontaneous flora or to adopt Austro-Hungarian influences. The soups, with their similarities and differences, are gastronomic reflections of the historical status and the long coexistence of the ethnic groups in Transylvania. The touristic capitalization of soups as an intangible cultural heritage resource can become a source of income for local people, contributing to the strengthening of local identity and the sustainable development of the area. It is supported by social entrepreneurship tourism and the consolidation of local networks of producers. In addition, ethnic soups can also be used as a quick and effective lunch option for assisted elderly people, students or busy employees.

Keywords: ethnic cuisine; gustemes; Transylvania; sustainable development

1. Introduction

1.1. European Interest in Cultural Heritage

In recent decades, Europe has been concerned with preserving its cultural heritage. The concept is central to the 1954 Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe. The Convention defines the dimensions of cultural heritage as follows: tangible-related to artefacts and monuments; intangible-associated with history, language and traditions; and political-related to values and principles. The Council of Europe's *Faro Convention* (2005) highlights the role of cultural heritage in supporting sustainable development, cultural diversity and contemporary creativity. At the same time, the *Faro Convention* [1] acknowledges what people and local authorities themselves consider as heritage, adding it to the officially recognized nationally protected heritage [2]. On the other hand, the *Maastricht Treaty* (1992) [3] also promotes the preservation of culture, highlighting its potential in shaping the common European identity. The *EU Council conclusions of 17 June 1994 on drawing up a Community action plan in the field of cultural heritage* [4] give priority to heritage from the point of view of its conservation, while supporting its connection with tourism, the media and new technologies.

Cultural heritage is the repository of the memory of European identity and preserves information about the historical transformations that have taken place in the formation and management of identity [2]. The stake of heritage conservation is mainly related to identity. As an identity resource, cultural heritage is an expression of human creativity and a source of community cohesion [5]; it is both an instrument for legitimizing and consolidating identity [6], as well as for sustaining local cultural diversity in the context of the homogenizing trend of European integration [7].

1.2. Cultural Heritage That Can Be Capitalized on from a Community and Sustainable Perspective

Nonetheless, interest in heritage is not only about identity, since it is not only oriented towards the past; it also has community and sustainable stakes. Cultural heritage is dynamic and dealing with it effectively requires expertise in both conservation and cultural management [5]. The restoration, conservation, renovation and revitalization of heritage resources all require specialists and heritage preservation is naturally the subject of a discipline in its own right, as part of cultural and art sciences [8]. On the other hand, the preservation of cultural heritage nowadays involves accessing heritage resources for the benefit of people and the environment. Cultural heritage remains alive and can only thrive through the involvement of local people [9]. Decisions on the management of heritage resources concern local people and their representatives in administration and politics directly. It is only natural that they are the result of participatory practices [6] and ensure intergenerational transmission of heritage resources [10]. Heritage strengthens people's connection to their places of origin [11] and supports sustainable development and well-being [12].

European cultural policies have shifted towards the sustainable dimension of culture and effective cultural management for the past decade. The interest in heritage has veered from conservation and the creation of shared cultural identity to the strategic role of heritage in socio-economic development [13]. In this context, the links of heritage with cultural institutions, citizens and communities alike have been promoted. Cultural management has become, together with social, economic and environmental concerns, a support for sustainable regional development [14].

1.3. The Sustainable Potential of Tourism

Tourism is one of the areas of economic activity with long-standing interests in sustainability [15]. These interests are aimed at integrated resource management and preservation of cultural integrity [16]. Current demand in tourism is moving towards differentiated and personalized, even niche products, namely towards alternative approaches to Fordist tourism [17]. Tourism thus becomes more sustainable [18], operators are directly and more interested in protecting sensitive natural and cultural objectives [19] and their interests converge with sustainable community development [20]. A sustainable approach fosters social innovation, takes a more participatory approach and focuses on the adaptation of touristic offers to local resources [21]. Furthermore, cultural resources are guarantees of sustainable development [22], whilst tourism can also develop low-income communities [15]. As a complementary alternative to traditional rural occupations [23], it is seen as a strategic way to revitalize areas in economic decline [24,25]. Social entrepreneurship, which is suitable for sustainable development, is effective in the development of sensitive tourist destinations and niche tourism [18]. Many such sensitive destinations and many tourist niches can be capitalized on as part of cultural tourism. Heritage tourism is part of cultural tourism.

1.4. Local Gastronomy and Heritage Tourism

Heritage tourism, favored in postmodernism, values traditional processes and practices [25]. The success of sustainable tourism projects depends on the involvement of local communities [24,26]. Tourism initiatives should start from the local level and be in line with local preferences and opportunities [25]. Locals are the major connoisseurs and carriers of cultural heritage contents [18]. They are the most likely to highlight their customs and traditions in heritage tourism [27,28]. The sustainability of heritage and tourism are interdependent as a result of the authenticity of the product on offer [27]. On the other hand, preserving and enhancing heritage enriches its holders culturally [29].

European interest in cultural heritage has been in line with UNESCO's interest in it. The 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention provides global scope to concerns about heritage resources [30]. The *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* ratified in 2003 at the UNESCO General Conference defines intangible cultural heritage as "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments,

objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage" [31] (p. 5). The Convention outlines five main domains of intangible cultural heritage: "(a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship" [31] (p. 5). The United Nations World Tourism Organization added gastronomy and culinary practices to the domains enumerated above in 2012 [32] (p. 4).

Gastronomic heritage is the set of culinary knowledge and skills recognized as heritage by a community [33]. Agricultural products, different dishes, procedures and tools for preparing dishes, as well as instructions on how to consume them, are parts of gastronomic heritage [34].

Gastronomy and culinary practices, as a field of intangible cultural heritage, suggests approaching gastronomic tourism as heritage tourism. The popularity of gastronomic tourism, centered on local food tasting activities, is growing [35].

Tourists are looking for evocative and meaningful experiences and local street food can help them satisfy this need. Cooked food, as an authentic expression of local culture [36], has become a tourist attraction. Food quality is the most significant predictor for the hedonic value of street food service. The finding that the hedonic value influences the intention to purchase street food indicates the potential of street food as a tourism product [37]. This is an area where innovative transformations are at hand. A study on street food in north-western Italy shows that a combination of tradition and innovation can provide a competitive advantage and reinforce a strong connection with the territory [38]. Also, encouraging communication with consumers would improve their food choices [39].

On the other hand, i.e., in another food service sector, organizing authentic meals and new culinary experiences, accompanied by tour guides, can enhance the overall satisfaction of tourists, increase the income of local restaurants and broaden their offer of traditional menus [40]. That is actually the case with other food services. Local products registered with geographical indications are the most efficient element for the development of gastronomic tourism. Reciprocally, the development of gastronomic tourism boosts the registration of local food and products with geographical indications [41].

Local gastronomy as a heritage resource is a tourist attraction and a source of social and economic benefits for locals [42]. In multi-ethnic areas, it strengthens the identities of different groups, functioning as a differentiating factor [43].

1.5. Rupea Area—History and Touristic Sights

The Rupea area is a multiethnic one. Rupea (situated in Brașov county) is a small town in the south-eastern part of Transylvania (Romania). Rupea is the only urban settlement in the north-western part of the county and, for this reason, the economic, legal and cultural center of the area. According to the last population census in 2011, in the town of Rupea there were 5269 inhabitants, mostly Romanians (68.15%). There were also Hungarians (18.5%), Roma people (6.83%), Germans (1.56%) and people of unknown/undeclared ethnicity (4.93%) [44]. In Rupea, which spans for 22% of the Brașov county area, there are 12 other communes (ATU) in addition to the central town of Rupea [45]. The distribution of the population by ethnicity in the area differs from the distribution in the town: 41.7% Romanians, 23.1% Magyars, 34.0% Roma people, 1.2% Germans, 0.1% other minorities [46].

In the area there are Romanian, Magyar and Saxon villages predominantly. Romanians represent the indigenous population. The Szekelys were a predominantly military population that accompanied the Hungarians from the Ural Mountains to Pannonia. Later they were the first to be sent by the Hungarian royalty to defend the intra-Carpathian borders from the Tatars and to strengthen the power of the crown in the region. They received privileges and the right to self-administration of the territory on the eastern border of Transylvania. In this region they bordered the Saxon-administered areas in Transylvania and from these neighboring areas those who practiced a trade and thought they would

have a better life went to the Saxon-administered areas. After 1900, the Szekelys would refer to themselves as Magyars. The Saxons were settled in the area in the mid-13th century by the Hungarian royalty. In 1324, there is documentary evidence of the battle won by the Saxons against the troops of the Transylvanian voivode, Toma. The Saxons had enlarged the small fortress of Rupea, transforming it into a fortress with three enclosures and with dwellings that could be used in case of need by the 15th century. The Saxons lived in the central area of Rupea along with the local Romanians and Szekely craftsmen who had come after 1700 from neighboring villages in the outlying areas until the 1802 Edict of Toleration of the Emperor Joseph II. The edict allowed Romanians and Szekelys to buy land for building their estate in the center of the town. There is no detailed information on the Roma people in the area. Their presence in the town of Rupea, as helpers of the Saxons and Romanians in various household chores, is recorded around 1800.

At that time, Rupea was a flourishing settlement with two schools, two pharmacies, three doctors of different specialties, a brass band and dancing parties in the hall of the Evangelical church. In Rupea, "Repser Heimatdank", a bi-monthly publication in the German language, was issued [47].

After the Second World War, the Saxons from the Rupea area began to leave for Germany for good. The process proceeded slowly during the communist period and at an accelerated pace after 1989. Despite their local historical importance, there is a small percentage of ethnic Saxons in the area nowadays due to this process. Nonetheless, their centuries-long coexistence with the other ethnic groups in the area has left a cultural mark on the latter.

The main local tourist attraction is the Rupea fortress. It was rehabilitated with European funds in 2009–2013 and, being very visible from one of the main roads through Transylvania, is visited by many tourists [48]. In the center of Rupea there is the Ethnography Museum "Gheorghe Cernea", subordinated to the Ethnography Museum of Brasov [49]. On the urban perimeter of Rupea and in the vicinity of the town, recent archaeological research has revealed several traces of old habitation, from the Paleolithic [50], Neolithic [51–53], Eneolithic [51,54–59], Bronze Age [51], Iron Age, up to the period of the Dacian kingdom, and the period after the conquest of Dacia by the Romans [60]. These findings could be promoted as points of interest for thematic hikes in the near future. Near Rupea there is the village of Racoșul de Jos. In the center of the village there is a castle dating back to the 17th century, which belonged successively to several Hungarian noble families who also owned the village. The castle is currently being renovated and can be visited [61]. On the outskirts of the village there is a geological reserve that can be visited, consisting of the crater of an extinct volcano, a collection of basalt columns and the "Emerald Lake" formed in the crater of an old quarry [62]. In Racoșul de Jos, the "Stone Day" festival takes place in August. Guided tours to geological sites, concerts, dance performances, art exhibitions, workshops, craft fairs and culinary fairs are organized on that occasion [63]. In the Rupea area there are many Saxon villages with fortified evangelical churches. These churches, among which the one in Viscri is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, are points of interest on various tourist routes [64]. In August, when the Transylvanian Saxons living in Germany traditionally return to their homeland for holidays, the "Haferland Week" (Haferland in German means Oatland) festival is organized in the area between Rupea and Sighisoara and features traditional crafts, arts and gastronomy [65]. The aforementioned area was once known for the cultivation of oats by the local Saxons.

The Rupea area is one with a high risk of poverty and low level of community development [66]. This state of affairs is due to the closure of local industrial enterprises in the town of Rupea after 1989, the privatization of the Binders and Asbestos Cement Plant from Hoghiz (near Rupea) followed by waves of employee layoffs, the departure of the majority of local Saxons to Germany in the first years after the 1989 following the political regime change in Romania, and more recent departures of young people to work abroad.

1.6. The Objectives of the Study

In this study, we will present a comparison of the traditional Romanian, Saxon, Magyar and Roma gastronomy in the Rupea area. We will then show how this intangible cultural heritage resource, significant for the differentiation and consolidation of ethnic identities, can be used for sustainable local development of the area, mainly by involving it in heritage-focused tourism.

We point out that the comparative presentation of the traditional gastronomy of the four ethnic groups that have been living together for centuries in this part of Transylvania provides clues about local interethnic relations. Soups are an almost indispensable dish from the daily menu of the inhabitants of the area. We propose the transformation of these common dishes into a local economic resource, through the tourism and community capitalization of the ethnic similarities and differences in their preparation. The comparative presentation of ethnic gastronomy and the highlighting of the sustainable development potential of the joint marketing of ethnic soups represent the novelty of the approach to this intangible cultural heritage resource in our article.

2. Materials and Methods

To achieve these objectives, we use the results of qualitative research based on semi-structured interviews. Between May and November 2022, we conducted 18 such interviews with elderly respondents of Romanian (four), German (six), Magyar (four) and Roma (four) ethnicity on the topic of culinary products cooked in households in the Rupea area during the middle of the last century. The interviews with ethnic Germans were the first and were conducted at the Fișer Home for the Elderly (Rupea town, Brasov county). The other interviews were conducted with members of the Rupea community, born in the town or in neighboring localities. The interviews were analyzed thematically. The questions in the interview guide concern traditional daily and festive menus, the ingredients and spices used, taste preferences and the importance traditionally attached to sweets. In this way we have identified the culinary products considered representative by the respondents, the most frequently cooked dishes and the characteristics identified as representative for the four ethnic cuisines. The number of interviews conducted was determined by reaching theoretical saturation.

We then approached those characteristics comparatively, highlighting the relationships between them according to a structuralist model inspired by Claude Lévi-Strauss' study of "goûtèmes" (in French; gustemes—elementary units of taste) [67]. These are constitutive elements of specific cuisines arranged in pairs. With their help, different cuisines can be analyzed and compared. The cuisine is a system of signs by which society unconsciously translates its structure, according to Lévi-Strauss. In the comparison he makes between French and English cuisine he uses three pairs of gustemes: endogenous/exogenous with regard to the origin of raw materials, central/peripheral with regard to the base of the meal and additions, accentuated/non-accentuated with regard to savory or insipid taste. Thus, the English prepare their main courses from tasteless endogenous raw materials and add savory exotic dishes, while the French cook with equally accentuated flavor combinations [67]. When comparing other types of cuisine, other pairs of gustemes could be used, according to Lévi-Strauss, such as: sour/sweet, minimum/maximum preparation time, roasted/boiled. We have used those and a few others to highlight the relationships between Romanian, Saxon, Magyar and Roma cuisine in the Rupea area.

Interviewees were informed about the goal of using their responses as part of our comparative research on ethnic cuisines in the aforementioned area.

3. Results

3.1. The Memories of Ethnic People about the Dishes of Their Traditional Gastronomy

The thematic analysis of the interviews on the traditional cuisine of the Rupea ethnic groups revealed similarities, due to the use of the same local resources, and mutual influences resulting from people having lived in the neighborhood for a long time. The analysis

also revealed differences, which are expressions of the specific ethnicity and historical particularities of the inhabitants' status in this part of Transylvania.

Polenta with milk as the first dish, followed by polenta with cheese and omelette, were indicated as the most common dishes by the vast majority of interviewees of different ethnic groups. This is natural in an area where maize has long been cultivated, large cattle (cows and buffaloes) are raised for milk, sheep for cheese and poultry (mostly chickens, but also ducks, geese) for meat. At the same time, as one Saxon respondent points out, those were dishes easy to prepare in the evening after a long day's work in the fields and would also make an easy dinner to cook in winter. During some periods, polenta was eaten throughout the whole week, while bread was served only on Sundays, as another Saxon respondent points out.

Potatoes, beans and cabbage are the main vegetables in the cuisine of all ethnic people in the area. They are prepared with the help of other vegetables such as onions, carrots, parsley and celery, which form the basis of most dishes cooked in the area.

It is an area where many dishes are made more savory with the help of "rântaș" (in Romanian), a mixture of flour browned in lard or oil and quenched with water or even with the juice of the dish being prepared, or with cream and/or egg. In general, the dishes are rather high in calories. Roma dishes are less fatty and less meaty variants of the Romanian dishes. The Roma people were inspired by Romanians when they worked as day laborers for the latter, according to one respondent.

This is an area where soups (non-soured, hereinafter simply called "soups") and sour soups are given great importance. Lettuce and bean sour soups were the main course for lunch in the fields during various agricultural labors, respondents point out. These are sour soups that can also be eaten cold, or just lukewarm. When milk and polenta were eaten, then soups or sour soups would seldom miss.

We have grouped the information on ethnic cuisine into three tables, the first containing ethnic soups and sour soups (Table 1), the second containing cooked dishes and garnishes for meat dishes (Table 2), and the third containing ethnic pastries and cakes (Table 3). We marked the presence of dishes in ethnic cuisines with a "+". We flagged ethnic differentiations in recipes when we found them based on our thematic analysis of the interviews.

Table 1. Soups and sour soups of the ethnic groups in the Rupea area.

Soups and Sour Soups	Romanians	Saxons	Magyars	Roma People
Chicken/beef soup	+	+	+	+
Salad soup with omelette	with dill and garlic	with dill and garlic, and poured over raw salad	with paprika and garlic	with dill and garlic
Dried bean soup with smoked meat and tarragon	+	with dried plums	+/with parsley	+
Potato soup with smoked meat and tarragon	+	+	+	+
Lamb sour soup	with lovage	with chervil	with lovage	with lovage
Cumin soup	with croutons	with croutons	with vegetables, flour sauce, dumplings or stripes of egg made dough	
Hop sour soup	with dill and egg	with onion, carrot and flour sauce		
Tomato soup with vegetables, dumplings	with parsley	with parsley	with lovage	
Vegetables soup	wlear	with sour cream	with farina	
Sour meat soup with rice	+	+		with borsch
Cabbage soup with smoked meat and dill	+	+		+

Table 1. *Cont.*

Soups and Sour Soups	Romanians	Saxons	Magyars	Roma People
Green bean broth	with thyme and dill		with parsley	with borsch and thyme
Meatball sour soup with cabbage brine and lovage	+		+	+
Plum and dried apple soup	+		+	
Pumpkin seed soup with noodles	+			
Cabbage brine with wide noodles	+			
Wheat soup with sautéed onions	+			
Dried bean soup with smoked plums and tarragon	+			+
Vegetables soup with homemade noodles and onion	+			
Spinach sour soup with bacon, pear and garlic		+		
Pearl barley sour soup with pork bone, ranch and egg		+		
Cream soup of orach with sour cream		+		
Vegetables sour soup with watercress		+		
Dried fruit sour soup with pork meat		+		
Chervil sour soup		+		
Fruit sour soup (gooseberries, sour cherries, rosehips, cherry plums) with vegetables and sour cream		+		
Fruit soup (sour cherries, cherries) with vegetables and flour sauce			+	
Pork sour soup with potatoes, bay leaves, paprika			+	
Lamb sour soup with potatoes, bay leaves and paprika			+	
Cabbage and lamb sour soup with dill and thyme			+	
Onion sour soup with flour sauce and bay leaf, served with poached eggs				+
Nettle broth with egg and garlic				+
Mushroom and potato soup with parsley				+
Vegetable sour soup with borsch and lovage				+

Table 2. Main course and side dishes for meat food of ethnic people from Rupea area.

Main Course and Side Dishes for Meat Food	Romanians	Saxons	Magyars	Roma People
Polenta with cheese	+	+	+	+
Omelette, optionally with bacon, sausage or ham	+	+	+	+
Minced meat wrapped in cabbage leaves ("sarmale")	+	+	+	+
Potato stew, optionally with meat	+	+	+	+
Mushroom stew with white sauce and parsley	+	+	+	+
Steak with pepper and garlic	+	+	+	
Pork stew with pickled cabbage, thyme, dill, sour cream	+	+	+	
Sautéed cabbage with sausages	+	+	+	
Pilaf with chicken soup	+	+	+	

Table 2. *Cont.*

Main Course and Side Dishes for Meat Food	Romanians	Saxons	Magyars	Roma People
Tomato sauce	+	for calf tail steak	+	
Mashed potatoes	+	+		
Beef ragout with horseradish	+	+		
Smashed beans with sautéed onions	+	+		
Boiled potatoes mixed with onions sautéed in lard	+		with paprika	
Polenta with plum jam	+			+
Fruit sauce (quince, apple, cherry, gooseberry, rosemary) with burnt sugar and flour sauce		+	+	
Chicken stew with dumplings		+	+	
Bean yam		+		+
Nettle soup with garlic		+		+
Cabbage with mutton meat	+			
Omelette with curd and bacon	+			
Cold polenta fried in lard	+			
Onion stew	+			
Vegetarian sarmale	+			
Pilewort stew		+		
Winter sauce with pickled cucumbers and tarragon		+		
Onion sauce with vinegar and sugar			+	
Rabbit stew			+	
Cabbage layers with minced pork			+	
Pork stew with potatoes, bay leaves, paprika			+	
Potatoes with cheese, sour cream and sausage, layered			+	
Baked potatoes				+
Chicken roasted in a pot				+
Meat stew, vegetables, cabbage and rice with thyme and bay leaves				+

Table 3. Pastries and cakes of ethnic people from the Rupea area.

Pastries and Cakes	Romanians	Saxons	Magyars	Roma People
Pancakes with jam, sugar or whey cheese	+	+	+	+
Doughnuts	+	+		+
Salty doughnits/(disc of dough fried in oil)	+		+	
"Lichiu"/"henclesh" (pie with fluffy dough, egg, cream and sugar), can also be with plums	+	+	+	
Sponge cake	+	+	+	
Cookies	+	+		
Apple pie	+	+	+	
Plum or cherry dumplings	+	+	+	
Tray-baked corn flour with egg, milk, sugar	+	+		
Cake with a shortcrust pastry, jam and criss-cross strips of dough on top	+	+		
Mini croissants with jam	+		+	
Potato dough dumplings with sugar, breadcrumbs and nuts	+		+	

Table 3. *Cont.*

Pastries and Cakes	Romanians	Saxons	Magyars	Roma People
Mini croissants with lard		with nuts	+	
Folded pies (dough stretched and folded by several layers) fried in oil	+			
Drycakes (dough rhombuses fried in oil with sugar)	+			
Cake with rehydrated dried fruit		+		
Cremeschnitte		+		
Honey sheets with lemon cream		+		
Snacks with cumin		+		
Snails in batter baked in a tray in milk			+	
Whey cheese and dill pie			+	
Sheep cheese pie			+	
Pastry with lard filled with jam			+	
Sprinkled pastry biscuits			+	

There are some soups and sour soups that all ethnic people from the Rupea area prepare. These are the ones at the top of Table 1. These are the clear meat soup with vegetables, with semolina dumplings or noodles, salad sour soup, bean or potato sour soup with smoked meat and tarragon and lamb sour soup. The first is the traditional Sunday and holiday soup. It is prepared all throughout Transylvania and is considered to be of Hungarian origin [68]. Bean and potato sour soups can also be prepared without meat. The former, as well as the lettuce sour soup, are most often prepared during agricultural work periods and are the basic dish for lunches taken in the fields. Lamb sour soup is the traditional Easter soup.

The soups and sour soups in the table are those found in the cuisine of more than one ethnic group, but not in all. This is the case, for example, for the cumin soup. According to one of the Saxon respondents, this was cooked once a week, because it was good for colon cleansing, and was given to women in the community who were breastfeeding.

The last soups and sour soups in Table 1 are those attributed by respondents to their own ethnicity only. Most of the Romanian ones are fasting culinary products, related to the long periods of quite severe fasting in Orthodox Christianity. The Saxons and the Magyars use summer fruits for soups and also make light, sour soups enriched with sour cream. The sweet–sour combination is widespread in the Saxon and Magyars cuisine. Whenever vinegar is used, as one Magyar respondent points out, a little sugar is needed. The Roma cuisine includes borscht, which is not specific to Transylvania, but it is often used in the Romanian outer Carpathian area, from where it was probably borrowed.

In all ethnic cuisines, sour soups are cooked more often than soups. One of the main reasons could be, as one Magyar respondent suggests, that sour soups are best kept for two to three days at the temperature of the pantry.

In addition to polenta with cheese and omelette, the respondents of all ethnicities indicated "sarmale" (a Romanian dish; i.e., rice with meat or various vegetables wrapped in cabbage leaves), potato stew and mushroom stew with white sauce as important main dishes in their kitchens. These are the dishes at the top of Table 2. All these dishes can be with meat in the case of the first two and with cream in the case of mushroom stew, or vegetarian. The following dishes, main courses or side dishes, are found in two or three of the ethnic cuisines, but not in all. This is the case for the Sunday steak and pilaf, mashed potatoes and tomato sauce, or various cabbage dishes with meat. The Saxons and Magyars prepare sweet sauces from the same summer fruits used in soups and sour soups, or from quinces, for meat cooked separately. The last dishes in the table are mentioned by representatives of one ethnic group and they are very varied. Roma dishes, such as roasted chicken meat, or a mixture of meat, vegetables, cabbage and rice, are more reminiscent of their traditional way of cooking using fire in the open, in a pot or in a cauldron.

Baked apples are a popular winter dessert option. With regard to pastries and cakes (Table 3), pancakes are mentioned in relation to all ethnic cuisines. Other products belong to three, two or one of the ethnic groups. This is the case for apple pie and holiday dough products, i.e., henclesh and sponge cake, or cookies and plum dumplings. The last products in Table 3 are those mentioned only in the cuisine of one of the ethnic groups.

The importance of sweets in the weekly menu is higher among the Saxons and Magyars than in the case of the Romanians and Roma people. Romanian respondents explicitly state that sweets were rare. Only one respondent recollects a cake with a pastry coat, jam and crossed strips of dough, always locked in grandmother's cupboard. The latter's key, however, was in a place known to the grandchildren. The same person mentions the other pastries only in connection with holidays. For example, the doughnuts on the last day before the beginning of Lent, on Epiphany and St. John's Day, or the Christmas cookies. It may be that the association with the holidays preserves the memory of the archaic and ritual character of pastries. The Saxon respondents also indicate the association of some of the desserts with the holidays. Cremeschnitte is such a holiday cake, and on the first day of Advent guests would receive chocolate cookies, and for Farsang (community party before entering Lent) and Ash Wednesday doughnuts would be made.

We tried to highlight graphically the extent of the gastronomic similarities and differences previously indicated in Figure 1. The figure summarizes the information from the previous tables. The lines represent the dishes mentioned by the respondents in the interviews, in the order corresponding to the one in the "Soups and sour soups" table (Table 1), the one in the "Main course and side dishes" table (Table 2), and, respectively, the one in the "Pastries and cakes" table (Table 3). The presence of dishes in traditional ethnic gastronomy is represented (in color) in the columns. We used different colors for the four ethnicities.
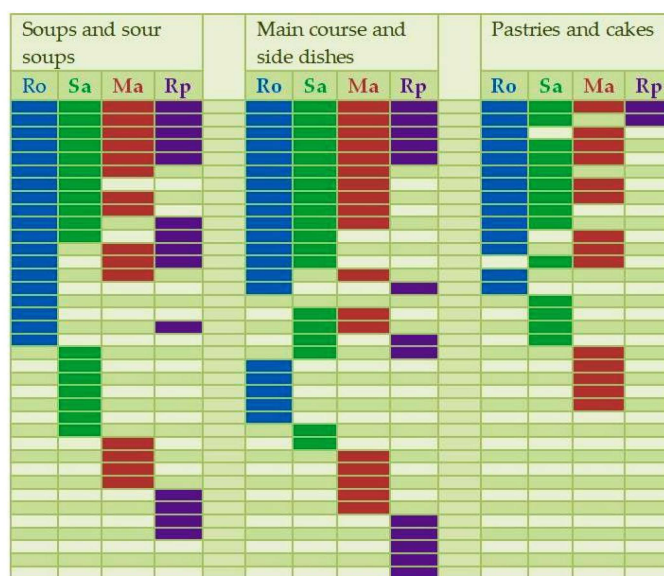

Figure 1. Ethnic gastronomic similarities and differentiations.

3.2. The Comparative Characteristics of the Gastronomy of the Ethnic Groups in the Rupea Area

As we have shown, the ethnic cuisines of the Rupea area share common dishes and features, borrowing from each other, but they also have specific features. All of those may consist in the use of certain ingredients, the combination of flavors, or the use of certain spices. For example, chervil is present only in Saxon dishes, and cumin and paprika are more abundant in Magyar cuisine than in other ethnic cuisines.

We have highlighted the similarities and differences between these cuisines with the help of the pairs of gustemes proposed by Claude Lévi-Strauss [67], appropriate for the

present analysis, and some others, which we consider relevant for the ethnic people of the Rupea area.

In Table 4 we have noted the presence (+) or absence (-) of traits associated with the gustemes for each cuisine.

Table 4. The comparative characteristics of the ethnic cuisines from Rupea area.

Gustemes	Romanians	Saxons	Magyars	Roma People
Lévi-Strauss gustemes				
Endogenous (as opposed to exogenous)	+	+	+	+
(Focus on) Central (as opposed to peripheral)	+	-	-	+
Strong (as opposed to light)	+	-	+	+
Combination of sour-sweet (as opposed to mutual exclusion)	-	+	+	-
Maximum time for cooking (as opposed to minimum time for cooking)	+	-	+	-
Boiled (as opposed to roasted)	+	+	+	-
Other gustemes relevant for the cuisine of the ethnic groups from Rupea area				
Food rich in calories (as opposed to food with average calories intake)	+	+	+	-
Spicy (as opposed to not spicy)	-	-	+	-
Hot (as opposed to not hot)	-	-	+	+
Local fruits cooked in soups, sour soups, sauces (as opposed to avoiding them)	-	+	+	-
Endemic flowers found in soups, sour soups, stews (as opposed to avoiding them)	+	+	-	+

The endogenous/exogenous pair refers to Lévi-Strauss's reference to the origin of the ingredients used in ethnic cuisines. In the Rupea area, which is predominantly agricultural and located in a central area of a continental province, the basic gastronomic ingredients are local products, for all ethnic groups. Central/peripheral pair refers to the importance given to main dishes in relation to additions. We have used this pair to mark the different attention paid to desserts in ethnic cuisines. The strong/light pair refers to Lévi-Strauss's emphasis on the flavor of the dishes.

The sour-sweet combination is common in Saxon and Magyar cuisine and is only accidentally encountered elsewhere. The pair maximum/minimum preparation time refers to the complexity of processing the ingredients. We have attributed the characteristic of minimum preparation time to the Saxon cuisine because of the importance attached to salads, herbaceous and leguminous dishes that are prepared quickly, and to raw green salad over which salad sour soup is poured. We have also attributed the minimalist cooking characteristic to Roma cuisine, for the influences preserved from their traditional manner of cooking on open fire. Concerning the latter, we considered Roma cuisine to be different from the others in terms of the pair boiled/roasted.

The Roma cuisine is also different from other cuisines in that it is less fatty and has less meat, which means it is lower in calories. The Magyars differ from the other ethnic groups in the area in terms of their propensity for seasoning. This is mainly due to the abundance of paprika used in many dishes. The spicy/non-spicy pair distinguishes Magyars and Roma people, who, unlike Romanians and Saxons, like spicier dishes. The use of indigenous summer fruits as the main, defining ingredients in the preparation of soups, sour soups and sauces differentiates the Saxon and Magyar cuisines from each other. With regard to the culinary use of wild flora, in addition to the mushrooms that everyone enjoys cooking,

hops, meadowsweet, lovage, nettles and pilewort are the main ingredients in Romanian and/or Saxon and Roma summer dishes.

The distribution of the gustemes as characteristics of the cuisines of the ethnic groups in the Rupea area should highlight, from a structuralist perspective, the features of these ethnic groups and the significant aspects of the history of their coexistence in Transylvania. For example, the use of wild flora in the kitchen indicates a close connection with the natural environment, a good knowledge of it, but also a skill in exploiting any potential resource. The reduced importance given to desserts in everyday life could indicate, as we have already shown, a reluctance to use profane, formerly ritual preparations, but also a long history of struggle with material deprivation. The preference for the sweet–sour combination in cooked dishes, and the use of fruit as main ingredients, suggests a closeness to Viennese and implicitly to Austro-Hungarian cuisine. These are just a few and the most useful of the results of an analysis of the distribution of gustemes in the cuisines of ethnic people in the Rupea area. A more detailed analysis is worthwhile and requires a separate approach.

However, common aspects and ethnic differentiations in local gastronomy can be capitalized on as intangible cultural heritage resources. The interviews carried out highlight these similarities and differences, especially in relation to soups and sour soups.

4. Discussion

Soups (non-soured or sour) are central dishes in the cuisine of the Romanians, Saxons, Magyars and Roma people in the Rupea area. However, they are much more widespread in the region. "Ciorba (sour soup, o.n.) is to Romanians what cheese is to the French, sheep to the Mongols, Colt to the Americans", jokingly claims Radu Anton Roman, a well-known Romanian author of gastronomic works [69] (p. 364). But the joke reveals the reality that soups and sour soups are constantly present on the locals' menu. This fact makes the diversity of traditional soups of the Rupea ethnic groups a resource of intangible cultural heritage that can be exploited for tourism. It can be efficiently and simply capitalized on by preparing and selling the soups of all the ethnic people in the area in the same commercial outlet, even encouraging their tasting on an ad-hoc basis. Bringing together Romanian, Saxon, Magyar and Roma soups as representative dishes in the four ethnic cuisines would give gastronomic expression to the interethnic relations in the area. The multicultural dimension of social life in Transylvania is in fact a resource of intangible cultural heritage in itself. Ethnic soups, offered as a common touristic package, would help locals to become more aware of their identity status and thus help tourists to get into the local atmosphere.

Ethnic soups would find their place in the vicinity of each previously mentioned tourist attraction and in the gastronomic offer of local festivals, which can be considered opportunities for tangible–intangible heritage entanglement [70]. Culinary tourism experiences are strongly linked to the local specifics, such as the local landscape, culture and creativity. Cultural heritage, with the traditions and culinary practices of the locals, is accessed through tourist experiences [71]. Local soups would strengthen the tourist offer of the Rupea area. Their recipes, with their interethnic differences and mutually borrowed features resulting from the centuries-long coexistence of Romanians, Saxons, Magyars and Roma people in the area, represent an intangible cultural heritage resource that can be easily exploited. As Bessière and Tibere [72] point out, gastronomic heritage is a marker of local identity.

4.1. Tourism Social Entrepreneurship as a Way to Promote the Ethnic Soups from Rupea Area

Soups are relatively easy to cook and they are tastier when cooked in large quantities, as anyone who has eaten in a communal setting (in a canteen, mess hall, or in Romanian restaurants) knows. They are tasty and easily manageable in consistency. They can be the only dish for a quick and easy lunch. Soups are also easy to portion and eat. A business centered on the marketing of soups in the above places and contexts could be successful. But the marketing of ethnic soups from the Rupea area is not the only source of benefit in

their promotion as a heritage resource. The best local soups are those made by locals. Soup making is also an activity that can bring in income. It could be part of local people's remit. We believe that tourism social entrepreneurship is an appropriate way of managing the preparation and marketing of ethnic soups.

Tourism social entrepreneurship catalyzes host communities [15] towards their sustainable development [73]. Tourism social entrepreneurship boosts the local economy, creates sustainable livelihoods and educates local tourism actors [15], provides innovative solutions creating community opportunities and benefits [18] and efficiently mobilizes local resources [74]. Tourism social entrepreneurship is geared towards maximizing benefits and minimizing the costs of tourism for locals [15,18]. It strengthens and uses local social networks to support regional economic interactions [21]. It favors a holistic approach to tourism [15,18,24].

The management of local tourism potential through tourism social entrepreneurship is appropriate for the economic profile of the Rupea area and can support its sustainable development. Involving local people in offering specific soups to tourists is an opportunity to strengthen communities and a source of economic benefits for them. Like in the neighboring Făgăraș Land [75], the women of the area have a long experience of cooking together. Only for the past 20 years the task of preparing food for weddings, community celebrations or funerals has been transferred to local restaurants or specialized catering companies. Until then this task used to be carried out by the women of the community, as an obligation towards the extended families of which they were a part. The joy and enthusiasm with which women cooked recently for the second edition [76] of the Lichiu Festival in 2022 held during the Haferland Week, or for the poorest members of the community at the suggestion of an Orthodox parish priest from Rupea [77], suggest the sustainable potential of the social entrepreneurship approach to the preparation of traditional local soups. Women from Rupea and neighboring villages would be the ones who would prepare their traditional soups. As appropriate, this could be their main lucrative activity, complementary activity to their main job or a source of income to supplement their retirement income.

In the preparation and marketing of soups specific to an area, human and natural resources can be harnessed sustainably altogether [78]. The vegetables used, the meat and cream which refine the taste of the dishes are all grown or traditionally grown/produced in the area, or in neighboring areas. The sorrel, nettles and hop used to prepare the light, cool summer soups grow spontaneously in the meadows, forests and valleys of the area and can be grown with little effort. Lettuce, spinach, beans, cabbage, potatoes, onions, carrots and parsley are grown in the area mainly for personal consumption in family households. The total share of vegetable crops cultivated may increase in response to market demand. Bringing together the ingredients needed to prepare soups encourages the creation of local production and supply networks. Increasing demand for these products is in the interest of local producers.

Most studies in the USA and Europe have found that consumers value local food and consider its premium price justified because of its origin. In addition to getting value for money and health benefits, consumers also appreciate ecological ingredients, the quality of life, the living environment, and the importance of supporting the local community and promoting social equity. The marketing of local food by the media, the identification and promotion of flagship products on a priority basis for certain regions and also valuing the socio-demographic dimension of buying local products are ways to make local food more competitive, as Arsil et al. [79] show. Levers of this kind can also be put into action in the promotion of ethnic soups in the Rupea area. When people "eat locally", they eat in a certain context which is embedded in their relationships with certain producers, certain markets, certain environments and certain people. Thus, food becomes a key part of the narrative that establishes their connections to that place [80]. Locally grown food is part of consumers' collective food identity, as Moreno and Malone [81] show. In this context, ethnic soups from the Rupea area could act as a brand that, by supporting local tourism, simultaneously builds consumer loyalty. Authenticity-seeking tourists like emblematical local foods and cultural-

gastronomic routes with well-defined destination branding [82]. "We have been cooking like this for hundreds of years ", or "The soups of our history" could be suggestive slogans in this context for the promotion of ethnic soups from the Rupea area. They, or others, should simultaneously signal the local provenance of the ingredients and the oldest of the culinary recipes. These are the pillars on which to build the brand of ethnic soups from the Rupea area. Their registration as local products with geographical indications would be a necessary step towards their sustainable development. Local products registered witht geographical indications are an asset for gastronomic tourism [41].

Local food marketing, a growing movement, economically supports both farms contributing to the local supply chain and local communities [83]. Implementing public-private partnership models at all levels of the supply chain could make healthy food choices easier and more accessible [84]. Appreciation of local products, and thus support for local networks of producers, is an expression of a broader reaction to reject the creeping industrialization of agricultural production and support sustainable agriculture [85]. Interest in local food empowers short food supply chains. These are viable options for small and medium-sized family farms, both in terms of economic profit and social recognition. But those interested in using short food supply chains need to be aware of the importance of social links and the need for cooperation with other producers. They need to have/develop technical, psychosocial, financial, communication and conflict management skills to retain their customers, whose loyalty is very important in the context [86]. Short supply chains are based on trust, fairness, sustainability and low opportunistic behavior. They are functional when merging the intention to protect local farmers with that of providing consumers with fresh locally grown produce [87]. In the Rupea area, i.e., in the town and in neighboring villages, people know each other. This is due in part to the weekly fairs the town has long hosted and to the fact that most of the area's youth have been, generation after generation, high school students in the town. Also, this is due to the general trend in communist Romania before 1989 of developing networks of personal relationships for food procurement. Short supply chains are reliable in the area. Involving locals from the Rupea area in offering ethnic soups for tourism is in this context a challenge and simultaneously, as we have shown above, an opportunity to strengthen local community relations.

4.2. Ethnic Soups from the Rupea Area, More than a Heritage Resource That Can Be Exploited for Tourism

As we have shown previously, soups are a culinary product present in the current menu of the inhabitants of the Rupea area. They are healthy food options. Their presence in the current menu is a proof of the wise, healthy traditional relationship of the locals with their living environment.

In Europe there is also a growing interest among retailers to redefine themselves as "contributors to health", as partners in a long-term health and well-being strategy [88,89]. Soup marketing is compatible with this strategy.

Local soups are made with lots and lots of vegetables. Vegetables are nutrient-rich ingredients tested in clinical trials for their effect on lowering blood lipids, which are risk factors for cardiovascular disease [90]. Soups are nonaggressive and nutritious and they are a pleasant warm meal. The soups of the ethnic Rupea area could thus also be at the center of programs to distribute food to the elderly. There are several such programs run by churches in the town. The symbolic significance of the soups and the memories brought back by their taste and flavors could make the meal a cause for celebration for the beneficiaries. The nutritional benefits of soups would thus be doubled by their therapeutic usefulness.

The soups of the Rupea ethnic people could also be a healthy option for schoolchildren in the town. The advantages of such a responsibly managed solution are manifold. Agriculture, nutrition and health are areas that can be effectively addressed together in programs to provide fresh and healthy meals to children with the help of local producers [91]. Such an effective approach is the provision of hot soup at or near school. Detailed information about the ingredients, how to prepare and the origin of the recipe would give extra value

to the offer. Young people's green consumption behavior should be stimulated through educational programs [92]. When it comes to choosing between products they know are healthy and products they know taste good, children clearly prefer the latter [93]. On the other hand, concerns about weight control can generate exaggeration. Australian teenagers, for example, believe that only fruit and vegetables are healthy and that all other types of foods generate weight gain. In their case, positive messages about the nutritional and health importance of all food groups would be more effective than messages about the danger of unhealthy food choices [94]. In addition, the promotion of healthy eating can be programmatically linked to the responsibility regarding the use of food resources [71]. Healthy and tasty soups, presented attractively and in detail in terms of ingredients, their nutritional value and their caloric intake, could be a popular solution for both children who want good taste and teenagers who are informed and careful about following nutrition trends. In Romania, a pilot program is being run to provide a hot meal to schoolchildren [95]. The ethnic soups from the Rupea area could be part of the local solution of the program. Furthermore, as we have shown, ethnic soups represent an intangible cultural heritage resource. Heritage resources have an identity stake and strengthen the ties between successive generations of a community, and young people's access to them is always beneficial [96].

From a wider perspective, the ethnic soups from the Rupea area could become part of the offer of street vendors and restaurants in Rupea and in the larger towns near the Rupea area, Sighișoara (Mureș county) and Brașov. Cities are consumers of food from the local and global hinterland, and sustainability and resilience of food systems are issues to be addressed in relation to the urban way of life [97]. Fast delivery street food is an option for busy people [37]. Street food vendors are generally open to offering healthy menus and thus could partner in a variety of settings, from afterschool programs to community centers and outdoor fairs [98]. Streets with great food that can create a sense of home, be an economic opportunity, and contribute to the overall health and happiness of people living in cities are a challenge for contemporary urban planners. A lively street that offers a wide range of activities and services for diverse beneficiaries and in the interest of the community could support the revitalization of the city center. This promising approach to town center regeneration aims at establishing permanent and temporary terraces on the sidewalk or street, the creation of food truck zones, market areas for local producers in parks and other spaces, and the integration of food systems into the already built environment. It could mean (re)building culture, revitalizing downtowns and neighborhoods, increasing availability of areas to walk to, boosting economic opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses and enhancing health and happiness [99]. Old town centers in Transylvania were gradually redefined as public spaces after 1989. They were taken over by locals and tourists alike. Traditional local food is on the menus of many of the restaurants located there. There are also regular traditional food fairs. On the other hand, following the change of political regime at the end of the last century, new secondary business centers have also developed in Romanian towns. A variety of pubs and small street food businesses have emerged near them. The ethnic soups from the Rupea area would find their rightful place in the old town center and in the offer for busy employees of the restaurants located in the business areas.

For all that to happen, the ethnic soups in the Rupea area would need to find brand recognition. The use of brands is generally effective in promoting intangible cultural heritage [100]. The recognition process can be accelerated with the help of new communication technologies and by developing the online component of communication. Tourism is an area that benefits greatly from innovative technological applications. For example, the interest in supporting heritage tourism with 360° immersive video applications is growing [101]. Similarly, mixed reality technology is successfully used to enhance the attractiveness of cultural heritage tourism experiences. The interactivity and vividness associated with mixed reality technology experiences contribute to the establishment of the tourism brand associated with these experiences and to the loyalty of the beneficiaries towards it [102]. Regarding online communication, social media is indispensable

in a good contemporary marketing strategy, including the promotion of intangible cultural heritage [100]. Today's busy employees, students or pupils are used to getting their information from online sources [103–105]. Gathering information from the online environment about local tourist attractions is becoming widespread as a way of approaching holiday routes.

Last but not least, the COVID-19 pandemic, which has globally reconfigured identities, behaviors and interests, has highlighted the role of social media in effective communication [106]. One of the lessons of the pandemic was related to the usefulness of a pre-established plan for crisis management of heritage resources [107]. The use of social media is a natural part of such a plan.

Online promotion of the ethnic soups in the Rupea area is also appropriate since the brand can be strengthened by offering an adjustable amount of information about Transylvania, Romanians, Saxons, Magyars and Roma people, as well as about the history of their interethnic relations. Thus, what the joining of those soups represents would be better and easier to understand.

4.3. The Gastronomic Expression of Living Together as a Cultural Heritage Resource

Culinary tourism, with its offer of new and unique authentic experiences, is also considered an opportunity for Romania as a significant source of economic development [108]. A study comparing the Sibiu area (also situated in southern Transylvania) with Sicily [71], points out the importance of the culinary component in building the brands of tourist destinations, and the importance of local collaborations between service providers for the sustainable development of this tourist niche. The authors present cultural and gastronomic tourism as a chance for alternative economic development in the context of the decline of traditional agricultural activities. According to them, the transformation of some gastronomic experiences into outstanding, top experiences is the result of good marketing [71].

Culinary tourism as an opportunity, the relevance of the culinary component in the local brand and the role of collaborative networks for the sustainable exploitation of heritage gastronomic resources are theoretical aspects with which our article is in convergence. However, we believe that the tourist exploitation of local gastronomy enhances local agriculture, is based on it, and does not replace it as a source of income for the locals. Our approach to marketing dining experiences is also different. We believe that ethnic soups should be promoted precisely as ordinary, familiar culinary products. They have been an important part of the daily menu of the inhabitants of the Rupea area for a very long time. Their heritage value is not linked to them being considered exceptional from a gastronomic point of view. The experience of consuming them is significant as a "taste" of culture, history, interethnic relations and the atmosphere of centuries of living together.

Grubor et al. [43] approach in large quantitative research the representations of the main ethnic minority groups (Magyars, Slovaks, Romanians, Croats, Montenegrins and Roma people) in the province of Vojvodina (Serbia) with regard to the authenticity and potential for tourism exploitation of their specific culinary products. The research reveals, as in the case of our research, similar dishes, possibly differentiated by an ingredient or spice, and specific ethnic peculiarities. The authors relate that to the multicultural, multinational, multilingual and multi-religious character of living in this part of Europe. The main role in the preservation of traditional gastronomy is assigned to the households of the locals. The research also reveals a direct correlation between the share of the ethnic group in the total population and the tourism potential of its gastronomic heritage. The aim of the research is to enhance tourism with authentic gastronomic products. The respondents indicate, among the ways of touristic capitalization of the gastronomic heritage, the familiarization of tourists with the gastronomic traditions of the ethnic groups and with the history and cultural traditions of the villages of Vojvodina, as well as the design of a gastronomic tour to allow tourits to taste the culinary products specific to different ethnicities.

In our article, unlike the one about ethnic groups in Vojvodina, the emphasis is not on multiculturalism, but on living together. Local history information associated with the

capitalization of ethnic soups as a cultural heritage resource is presented in this perspective. More importantly, our proposal is that the soups are offered together. It is not about tasting them successively, as in a gastronomic tour, but about understanding, with their help, the borrowings, influences and identities that give the cultural specificity of the area.

Transylvanian soups, in fact those from Făgăraș Land, with which the Rupea area borders to the south-west, are also presented as a cultural heritage resource that can be exploited in a sustainable way [78]. In that case, it is about Romanian soups. Făgăraș land is historically and demographically an area inhabited by Romanians. The valorization of Romanian soups is presented in this context as a way to stimulate the sustainable economic development of the area, through the use of local agricultural products and human resources. In our article, the Romanian soups represent only a part of the heritage resource to be exploited.

The proposal to capitalize on, in a unique approach, the soups of all the ethnicities of the Rupea area, with an emphasis on their similarities and differences as a gastronomic expression of a long coexistence, alongside signaling the sustainable tourist potential of common culinary products present in the traditional everyday menu of ethnicities, are significant dimensions of our approach in relation to other approaches to the ethnic aspects of gastronomy as intangible cultural heritage resources.

5. Conclusions

The promotion of traditional soup recipes of the Rupea ethnic groups as an intangible cultural heritage resource is in line with the contemporary European interest in heritage and its sustainable participatory approach. Soups are gastronomic products on the daily menu of local people. Their recipes, handed down through generations, include local ingredients that are readily available. The many ways in which traditional soups can be sustainably exploited show how European interest in heritage is justified. Cultural heritage is a generous reservoir of sustainable development solutions. It preserves the wise solutions of previous generations having faced environmental challenges. Today's contemporary challenges bring back the focus on that particular type of wisdom. They make, for example, the ethnic soups of the Rupea area more than just a tourist offer. Similarly, further careful study of heritage resources will provide further development tools. This is the generous opening of any study of intangible cultural heritage resources: each research output can be extended with suggestions for sustainable (re)settlement in relation to the resources.

Research limitations. Ethnic types of cuisine and their reciprocal influences are broad research themes. The present article only focuses on a comparative approach aimed at highlighting the main features of the Romanian, Saxon, Magyar and Roma people cuisine as indicated by the respondents. The comparison can be developed in depth, so that the full complexity of interethnic gastronomic influences and other products that can be sustainably used in addition to soups is highlighted. Another limitation of the research stems from the relatively small number of interviews conducted for each ethnic group. That was due to the emergence of theoretical saturation for the research questions, but more interviews would probably have opened up new, valuable themes contributing to local sustainable development. For example, we assume that richer Romanian households may have borrowed more from the gastronomy of the Saxons and Magyars, unlike households on the poverty line. Another hypothesis is that in the case of dishes present in several traditional ethnic cuisines, their origin can honestly be claimed by representatives of several ethnicities. Regarding other products that can be used sustainably, lichiu/hencleş is prepared slightly differently in each village and area. We believe that this type of pie, which everyone is proud of, can be capitalized on. The festival dedicated to it is a good start in this regard.

During the research we identified relatively few characteristics specific to Roma cuisine. This is due to the fact that the Roma from the Rupea area have taken over many culinary practices and customs from the Romanians, and that is highlighted by the interviews. In-depth research in the more isolated communities could reveal more

gastronomic particularities to complement the collection of ethnic soups as a resource of intangible cultural heritage.

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